Workman has published Bud Sagendorf's nostalgic reminiscence POPEYE: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS. It's very light on biographical material about POPEYE creator Elzie Segar, but the anecdotes are worth reading. Very early in the life of the strip, Segar hired Sagendorf to assist him, and the assistant relates how he bacame one of the family. Segar loved to fish and the pair used to go out on a small boat and fish while they worked out the storyline for those early POPEYE strips. This book is more Sagendorf than Segar, which is to be expected and we ought to be grateful that there are as many Segar strips and Sunday pages as there are reprinted. Sagendorf focuses on the characters, redrawing each of them and giving short biographies. Popeye, Olive Oyl, Roughhouse, Wimpy, the Jeep, Swee'pea, Alice The Goon, and the rest of the Segar menagerie are included.

Popeye has had a long career and it is far from over with cartoons re-running all the time and a live action film in production. True fans remember how free and flamboyant the strip was in the days before it was censored by the Syndicate. Popeye was openly aggressive and violent and didn't let anyone push him around, a popular attitude during the Depression thirties when the average guy got dumped on by just about everyone from his boss to his wife. Popeye dealt with problems by punching them out. If the reader was in no position to hit back, Popeye was. Segar's career was short. He died in 1939 at the age of 44. Sagendorf doesn't mention this at all. I asked Bill Blackbeard what killed Segar and he said it was probably cancer, but the thirties were a period when cancer wasn't something you mentioned. Readers who have only seen the Sagendorf or animated interpretation of Popeye will have a chance to see the original Segar in this book. $8.95 at your bookstore. C.G.

1978 © KFS

COMIX WORLD 128. August 20, 1979. © Clay Geerdes, Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Subs: $6 for 24, $10 for 48. Ads: 5 and 10. Logo by Bob Vojtko.* A new mini-comic--SAUCY SCI-FI. 75¢ pp from Marc Von Arz, 441 N. Rockingham L.A., CA 90049.* Rick Geary (photo below) has done 10 mini-comix. To get them all, send $4.60 to him at P.O. Box 99835, San Diego, CA 92109. Titles include NIGHT BEAT, IKE AND MAMIE, and FAREWELL TO CHARLIE CHAPLIN.*Todd's DR. ATOMIC 5 is out.

All you Pogophiles will be glad to hear that POGO: THE OKEFENOKEE STAR is alive and well. A third issue just out this year with the rest of the reprints of the POGO strip from the New York STAR. More photos and background material on Walt Kelly, who was born August 26, 1913. Pogo was born in a strip in ANIMAL COMICS in 1943, but didn't become a star until the fifties when Kelly turned the strip into overt political satire and had his characters in the Okefenokee Swamp discussing all the central issues of the time, notably McCarthyism. The cuteness of Pogo and Albert et al probably relates to Kelly's six years with Disney (1935-41). All three issues of the Pogozine are available from Swamp Yankee Studios, P. O. Box 2311, Bridgeport, CT 06608. $4 ea. pp. C.G.

24 NEW YORK STAR, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1948
POGO
Walt Kelly
DEACON MANTIS MCNUBBY/ JUS' THE HONEST TYPE I'M LOOKIN' FOR TO SELL THEGE TICKETS TO THE BIG NEW YEAR'S GAME!
BIG GAME, BOLL WEEVIL?
NEWEST THING IN BOWL GAMES THE ATOMIC BOWL!
IT JUS' HAPPEN I IS GOT THIS DECK OF CARDS - THEM IS GOOD FOR TICKETS, I SAYS
AND THE BOWL?
NATURAL, SIR, THAT WOULDN'T BE ARY PROBLEM TO ME.
QUITE SO! FORGOT YOU WERE A BOLL WEEVIL BY TRADE--- MMM-TUM TUM-MM...

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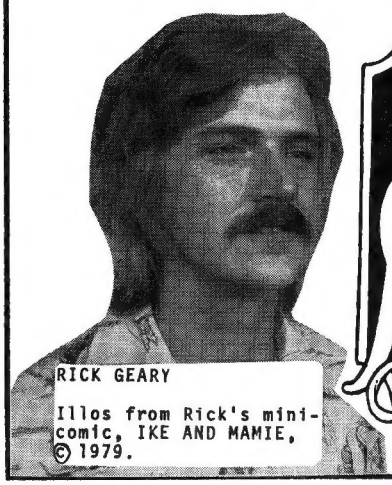
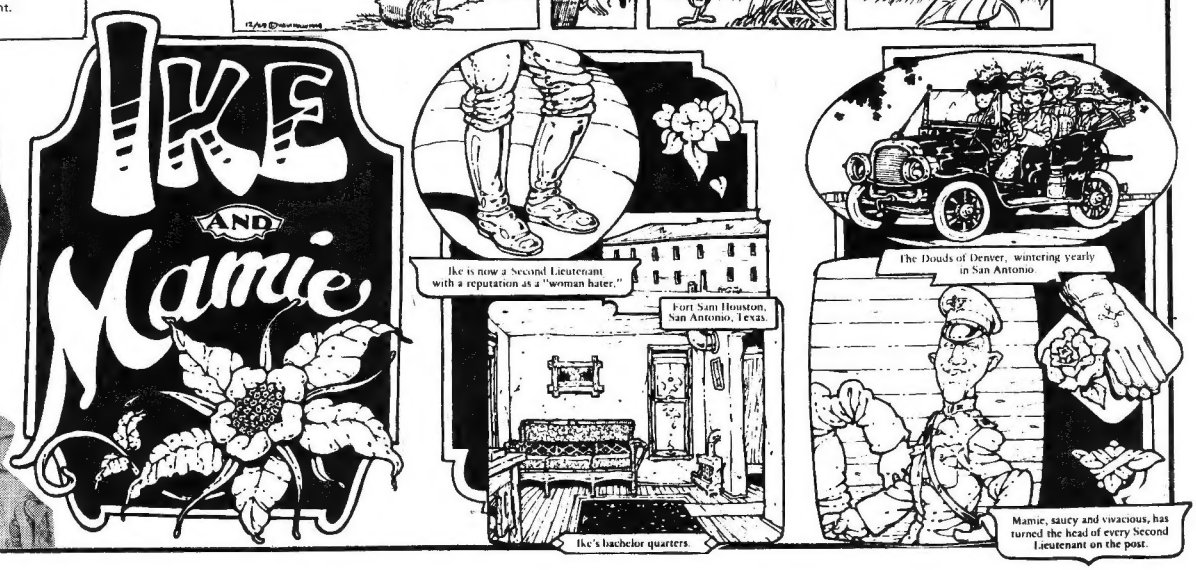
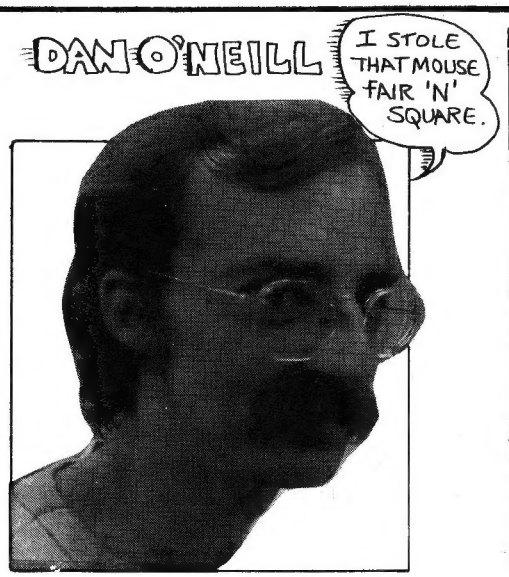
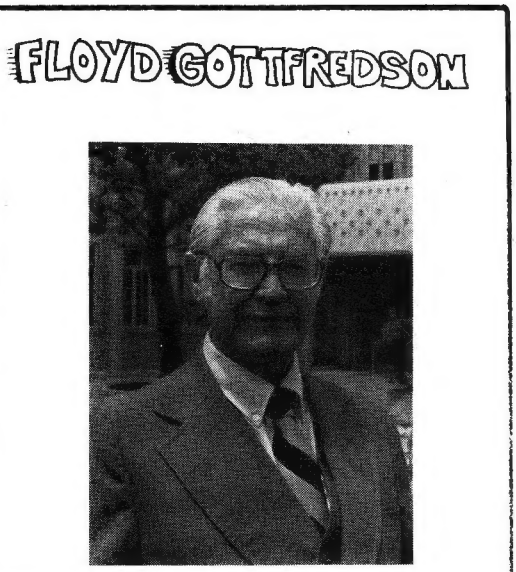


RICK GEARY

Illos from Rick's mini-comic, IKE AND MAMIE, © 1979.


IKE AND Mamie
Ike is now a Second Lieutenant with a reputation as a "woman hater."
Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.
Ike's bachelor quarters.
The Douds of Denver, wintering yearly in San Antonio.
Mamie, saucy and vivacious, has turned the head of every Second Lieutenant on the post.





AIR PIRACY REVISITED

Part of the original charge made by Disney Productions against Dan O'Neill was an accusation of "tarnishing the Disney image," that image being the one of asexual, apolitical, Midwestern smalltown cuteness which had evolved in the forties; certainly not the image of a rubbery blasé mouse playing music on a pig's tits in Steamboat Willie (1928) or that of a little battalion of naked babies frolicking among the animals and flowers (More Waterbabies, 1937). In the parody comics, MICKEY MOUSE MEETS THE AIR PIRATES FUNNIES (two issues, 1971), Dan O'Neill and his studio evoked the spirit of the original Mickey and attributed to him the desires and attitudes of a real mouse. The result was outrageous and humorous. It was this "pornographic" aspect of the AIR PIRATES FUNNIES which upset Floyd Gottfredson, the man who took over the MICKEY MOUSE newspaper strip in 1930 and developed the mouse into an adventure character. Appearing as a guest at this year's Bay Con at the University of San Francisco in San Francisco, Gottfredson was interviewed by Steve Fox for his evening magazine show and expressed his disapproval of O'Neill's parody. One would hardly expect a man who spent 45 years of his life drawing the strip for Disney studios to approve. He retired a few years ago and has nothing but good things to say about Disney. Asked about Richard Schickel's book THE DISNEY VERSION (1967), he told his audience that Schickel only interviewed "malcontents" and didn't talk to anyone at Disney. Schickel says he was barred from the Disney archives when they found out he was doing a book that was critical of Disney and his philosophy; in other words the people in Walt's corner wouldn't talk to him because they had been told not to.

Let's back up a second and recapitalute for those who are not up on what O'Neill did. After his ODD BODKINS strip was censored by the San Francisco CHRONICLE over strips which related to the killing of a judge in San Rafael, California, O'Neill went underground and did his own books. The first DAN O'NEILL'S COMICS AND STORIES were published by Company and Sons in San Francisco circa 1970-71. Disney, having become a massive corporation which had infiltrated nearly every area of American life, O'Neill used some Disney characters in his social and political parodies, mixing them in with historical figures like Jesse James (the subject of his PENNY-ANTE REPUBLICAN one-center) and Abraham Lincoln. What he did in those comics was a kind of stream of-consciousness exploration of the American psyche and in doing so he dealt with the material of that psyche, i.e., images of characters like Mickey Mouse and banks like the Bank of America along with his own fantasy characters like the Bat-winged Hamburger Snatcher. At the same time, he got a studio on Harrison Street in San Francisco and began to train some other young cartoonists to work in the medium. Among them were Gary Hallgren, Ted Richards, Bobby London, and Shary Flenniken. Each of them took a different artist and studied that artist until they could imitate the style completely. London did Herriman and 30's Disney. Hallgren did Sterrett. Flenniken did I. L. Webster. That O'Neill was a good teacher is evident from the success of his students. Bobby London is working in New York, his illos appearing in NATIONAL LAMPOON and VILLAGE VOICE. Hallgren has become adept with an airbrush and his illos often appear in HUSTLER MAGAZINE. Shary Flenniken has become an editor at NATIONAL LAMPOON. Ted Richards has his own studio in San Francisco and has produced half a dozen of his own titles (DOPIN' DAN, E. Z. WOLF, and THE FORTY-YEAR-OLD HIPPY, the 2d issue of which will be out this Summer). The way they worked at the Air Pirates studio was similar to the way The Committee worked in San Francisco. Committee was improvisational theater. A group of actors jammed on ideas. O'Neill hung out there and learned the technique. Why not employ it in comics? He, Ted, and the others took characters and jammed stories and sat down to draw them. This is the way the material in the AIR PIRATES FUNNIES was produced. During this period, I interviewed O'Neill for GRAPHIC STORY WORLD. He talked about satire, parody, the Disney corporation, and the effects of the mouse on his life and his need to exorcise the mouse by drawing it. He anticipated a lawsuit and was looking forward to getting things out in the open between himself and Disney. He explained that the mouse he was drawing was not the same mouse Disney was now using, that "the mouse" was no longered covered by copyright anymore than a lot of the characters he had run in his own ODD BODKINS. (Those interested in this copyright question are referred to appropriate issues of the San Francisco Law Review--a number discuss the case of Disney vs Dan O'Neill and the Air Pirates.) Well, some time passed. The comix came out. Disney filed suit. The law crawled along as it always does. There were injunctions against O'Neill. Ron Turner, who had published the comics, settled with Disney out of court as did Gary Hallgren. London and Richards remained in the ring with O'Neill. The court gave Disney $90,000 from each of them. The corporation won over the individual artist. Ted Richards had a bankruptcy sale on July 21 of this year to try and raise money to pay his lawyers. Mickey Mouse, the product (t-shirts, drinking cups, pencils, plates, toothbrushes) has been saved, because that's what this is about --the tons of money that pour into Disney's holding company as royalties from the licensed characters. On a panel in San Diego in early August 1979, Dan O'Neill continued to argue for the right to parody in spite of the Supreme Court Decision against him. "The bigger the fool, your know, the bigger the fool killer." I asked Harvey Kurtzman if MAD was sued for "Mickey Rat" and he said "No." Well, is Mouse 1 the same as Mouse 2? Will O'Neill be jailed for mousenapping? We'll know soon.

-Clay Geerdes

Dan O'Neill and Kurtzman